

WMGS5a
Women, Gender, and Sexualities

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce you to the exciting fields of women's, gender, and sexualities studies and equip you with a toolbox of theories, concepts, and language developed by generations of writers, artists, and scholars through their own, often painful, experiences. As the black feminist theorist bell hooks once wrote, "...I came to theory because I was hurting—the pain within me was so intense that I could not go on living. I came to theory desperate, wanting to comprehend—to grasp what was happening around and within me. Most importantly, I wanted to make the hurt go away. I saw in theory then a location for healing" ("Theory as Liberatory Practice," 1). Feminist theory is a process through which we learn how to "name the pain." A key focus of the course is to explore the multiple ways in which the core categories in the course's title—women, genders, and sexualities—intersect with each other, and with race, class, nationality, religion, age, ableism, and other social identities. We will read texts from various disciplines and genres (graphic novels, poetry, short stories, art) for diverse understandings of gender and sexuality in today's world. Finally, this class aims not only to impart knowledge but also to envisage ways to enhance social justice and equity in our world—that is, not just theory but praxis through a class project.

This course serves as a gateway course and is required for the minor or major in **Women's Gender and Sexualities Studies**. It also counts as an elective in **International and Global Studies** and **Social Justice and Social Policy**.

Learning Goals

- To identify and critically analyze key concepts and themes in the interdisciplinary fields of women's, gender, and sexuality/queer studies;
- To explore the intersections of sexuality, race, ethnicity, age, religion and other categories;
- To articulate the forms of institutional inequalities and oppressions impacting non-gender conforming and sexual minorities, including homophobia, heterosexism, transphobia, etc.;
- To analyze power and privilege;
- To understand how gender and sexuality—including bodies, desires, inclinations, orientations, and roles—are socially constructed;
- To pay special attention to social groups whose experiences are marginalized and ignored;
- To develop oral and writing skills;
- To engage in social justice activism.

Required Books

- Mariko and Jillian Tamaki, *Skim* (Groundwood Books, 2010)
- Viet Thanh Nguyen, *The Refugees* (Grove Press, 2017) or Warsan Shire, *Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth* (Warsan Shire, 2011) – Choose one text - 2 discussion groups
- All readings will be available on the class Latte site



Required Videos

Maid in America, dir. Anayansi Prado (2004)
Sins Invalid, dir. Patty Berne (2013)

Course Requirements:

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| <i>Attendance and Participation in lectures and Section:</i> | 15% |
| <i>Clapbacks for Discussion Section</i> | 10% |
| <i>Take-Home Midterm</i> [due 10/3; Latte submission by 5PM] | 15% |
| <i>Cultural Analysis Paper</i> [due 11/9; Latte submission by 5 PM] | 15% |
| <i>Graphic Novel Analysis Paper</i> [due 12/6; Latte submission by 5 PM] | 15% |
| <i>Prison Pen Pal Activism Project</i> [2 page reflection; due on final exam] | 15% |
| <i>Final Exam</i> | 15% |

Intellectual Citizenship: Your active participation as an **intellectual citizen** is **essential** to this course. We come together not simply to absorb information but to create new understandings. Please come to class fully prepared to take part, and be sure to bring copies of the day's readings with you. Do not simply read for content but for themes and questions, silences and absences.

Small-group discussion sections: Each of you will be asked to attend and participate actively in a discussion group. Please read the assignment for the discussion session. A qualified teaching assistant will lead each group.

Clapbacks: Respond to the readings/movie for the discussion section in 100 words or more. Responses can include insights, questions, critiques, and so forth. Include details from the

reading to make the clapback relevant. Clapbacks are due by 12 PM on the day of class.

Mature Content, Classroom Climate, and Trigger Warnings: Readings, films, and discussions covered in this course will be challenging due to topics that you may find painful or traumatizing emotionally. Reading and discussions may trigger strong feelings of anger, discomfort, anxiety, confusion, humor, and excitement. Our classroom seeks to be a safe space for critical and civil exchange of ideas. The professor will try to forewarn students about potentially disturbing subjects and requests that all students seek to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and sensitivity.

Extra Credit:

- Students may earn extra credit by attending at two Women's and Gender Studies public lectures during the semester and writing a one-page summary of the principal points, to turn in by or before the following class meeting. **3 points each will be added to the midterm or final exam.**
- Students can also earn extra credit by participating in a social action on Indigenous People's Day (TBA).

Six-Week Take-Home Exam (3-4 pages)

Cultural analysis: 4-5 page essay: Engage in close examination of material in a popular medium (e.g., magazines, music, television, radio)

Graphic Novel analysis: 4-5 page essay: Analyze one theme in Tamaki's coming-of-age graphic novel *Skim*.

Prison Pen Pal Project: 2 –page response paper

- Black & Pink is an open family of LGBTQ prisoners and “free world” allies who support each other. Write regularly (at least once every week but more often if possible) to a prison pen pal. Read the guidelines carefully on the website and come see the professor or TFs if you confront any challenges.
<http://www.blackandpink.org/> (Click on to Pen Pals).
- Red Fawn Fallis, an unarmed medic who was helping injured water protector at Standing Rock, was arrested for allegedly firing a firearm while being wrestled to the ground by law enforcement officials. She has been in captivity since 27 October 2016. She was supposed to be moved to a half-way house but she remains incarcerated. You can write her at Red Fawn Fallis, 205 6th St. Ste. 201 Jamestown ND 58401. [If she is moved to a new location, I will post an announcement of her new address].

Final Exam: The final examination will draw on both lectures and readings. A study guide will be passed out and there will be no surprises.

Late work: Most students are able to meet deadlines successfully. The few who fail to turn in

assigned work by the deadline have the advantage over the rest of the class of extra time to consider and compose their papers. Out of fairness to the others, assignments that arrive after the deadline will not receive full credit; they will be penalized by 1/3 of a grade for every weekday the work is late. For example, a B/C paper due Monday that arrives Wed will receive C+/D+. Please note: Late papers will normally receive full credit only when they are supported by a written note from a doctor or dean.

Credit Hours: Success in this 4 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.).

Academic integrity: Academic integrity is central to the mission of educational excellence at Brandeis University. Each student is expected to turn in work completed independently, except when assignments specifically authorize collaborative effort. It is not acceptable to use the words or ideas of another person without proper acknowledgment of that source. This means that you must use footnotes and quotation marks to indicate the source of any phrases, sentences, paragraphs, or ideas found in published volumes, on the Internet, or created by another student.

Violations of University policies on academic integrity, described in Section 3 of Rights and Responsibilities, may result in failure in the course or on the assignment, and could end in suspension from the University. If you are in doubt about the instructions for any assignment in this course, you must ask for clarification.

Students with a Disability on Record: Please notify me and provide documentation from the university so that we can best accommodate your needs.

RESOURCES ON CAMPUS:

Gender and Sexuality Center

Alex Montgomery

Pronouns: They/them/theirs

Usdan 105G, Winer Lounge

781-736-8582

arenmonty@brandeis.edu

Brandeis Library (Research Resource for WGS)

Alex Willett

Pronouns: They/them/theirs

awillett@brandeis.edu

781-736-4683

http://guides.library.brandeis.edu/prf.php?account_id=43163

Brandeis Intercultural Center

Swig Center

781-736-8580

I. Introduction

Fri, 9/1 | Introduction

- Asam Ahmad, “A Note on Call-Out Culture,” *briarpatch magazine* (2 March 2015)
- Kai Cheng Thom, “9 Ways We Can Make Social Justice Movements Less Elitist and More Accessible,” *Everyday Feminism* (27 September 2015)
- *Optional*: bell hooks, “Theory as Liberatory Practice” from *Teaching to Transgress* (1994)

Submit your Introduction on Latte after class: A few lines about you: Name, preferred pronouns, where you are from, one artifact that describes you (it can be an object, book, piece of art, music, etc)

Tue, 9/5 Genealogies of the Women’s Movement: A Short History

- Betty Friedan, “The Problem That Has No Name” from *The Feminist Mystique* (1963)
 - Charlotte Bunch, “Lesbians in Revolt” from *Passionate Politics: Feminist Theory in Action* (1972)
 - Audre Lorde, “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” from *Sister/Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (1984)
 - Nellie Wong, “When I Was Growing Up” from *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (1981)
- CLAPBACK ASSIGNMENT: Select one reading and write a response

II. Key Terms and Concepts

Fri, 9/8 | Does Sex=Gender?

- Judith Lorber, “‘Night to His Day’: The Social Construction of Gender” from *Paradoxes of Gender* (1993)
- Katrina Karkazis, *Fixing Sex: Intersex, Medical Authority, and Lived Experience* (2008), chpts 4-5 [Ebrary]
- Jamaica Kincaid, “Girl” *The New Yorker* (26 June 1978)
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1978/06/26/girl>

Optional: Take the Kate Bornstein Gender Aptitude test:
<http://www.utne.com/lens98/body/gender/quiz.html>

Tue, 9/12 | Gendered Regimes and Socialization

- Allan Johnson, “Patriarchy, the System: An It, Not a He, Them, or Us” from *The Gender Knot* (2005)
- Karin A. Martin, “Becoming a Gendered Body: Practices of Preschools” *American Sociological Review* 63 (1998): 494-511.

Fri, 9/15 | Discussion Section: Power, Privilege, and Intersectionality

- Robin DiAngelo, “White Fragility,” *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy* 3 (2011): 54-70
- Evin Taylor, “Cisgender Privilege: On the Privileges of Performing Normative Gender,” in *Gender Outlaws* 268-72.
- Roxane Gay, “Peculiar Benefits,” *The Rumpus* (16 May 2012)
<http://therumpus.net/2012/05/peculiar-benefits/>
- CLAPBACK ASSIGNMENT

III. Ways of Knowing: Religion and Science

Tue 9/19 | The Genesis of Gender: Christianity, Judaism, and Islam

- Narratives about Eve (Chava, Hawa) in the Hebrew Bible, Midrash, New Testament, and Qur'an
- How many narratives did you find in the “Genesis” account?
- How have rabbinic, early Christian, and Islamic authorities interpreted the Genesis account to construct gender hierarchies, roles, and status?

Fri, 9/22 | Rosh Hashanah (no class)

Tue, 9/26 | Biological Reasoning

- Emily Martin, “The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles” *Signs* 16:3 (1991).
- Anne Fausto-Sterling, “A Question of Genius: Are Men Really Smarter Than Women?” from *Myths of Gender: Biological Theories About Women and Men*
- *Optional* (1992)
Londa Schiebinger, “Why Mammals are Called Mammals” (40-74) from *Nature’s Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science* (2004)

IV. Sexualities, Visibility, and Safety

Fri, 9/29 | Discussion Section: Masculinities

- Junot Díaz, “Ysrael” and “Drown” from *Drown*
- John Riofrio, “Situating Latin American Masculinity: Immigration, Empathy, and Emasculation in Junot Díaz’s *Drown*,” *ATENEA* (2008).
Optional
- Shira Tarrant, “Constructing Masculinity: Putting the How and the Why in the XY” from *Men and Feminism* (2009)
- Michael S. Kimmel, “Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame, and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity” from *Race, Class, Gender in the United States* (1998)
- CLAPBACK ASSIGNMENT

Tues, 10/3 | Brandeis Thursday

Six-Week Take-Home Essay Due by Latte Submission

Fri, 10/6 | ***Queer Disidentification***

- Cathy Cohen, “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 3:4 (1997): 437-65.
 - Riki Wilchins, “A Certain Kind of Freedom: Power and the Truth of Bodies,” from *Genderqueer: Voices from Beyond the Sexual Binary* (2002)
 - Tim Murphy, “Identity-Free Identity Politics: A Report from the Agender, Aromantic, and Asexual Front line” <https://www.thecut.com/2015/10/complex-linguistics-campus-queer-movement.html>
- Optional*
- José Esteban Muñoz, “Performing Disidentifications” from *Disidentifications: Queens of Color and the Performance of Politics* (1999)

10/9 | **Indigenous People’s Day (Extra Credit – Organized Action)**

Tues 10/10 | **Transgendered Lives**

- J. Halberstam, “Transgender Butch: Butch/FTM Border Wars and the Masculine Continuum”
 - Leslie Feinberg, *Stone Butch Blues*, selections
 - Dani McClain, “‘Being Masculine of Center’ While Black,” *Colorlines* <https://www.colorlines.com/articles/being-masculine-center-while-black>
- Optional:* Gayle Rubin, “Of Catamites and Kings: Reflections on Butch, Gender, and Boundaries”

V. Gender-Based Violence

Fri 10/13 | **Gender-based Violence as Colonial Oppression**

- Sarah Deer, *The Beginning and End of Rape: Confronting Sexual Violence in Native America* (2015), intro and chpt, 4 [ebrary]

Tue 10/17| **Discussion Section: Sexual Violence**

- Patricia Yancey Martin and Robert A. Hummer, “Fraternities and Rape on Campus” from *Gender and Society* 3:4 (1989)
 - Lori Girshick, “Did She Call It Rape,” from *Woman-to-Woman Sexual Violence* (2002)
- Optional*
- Doug Meyer, “Gendered Views of Sexual Assault, Physical Violence, and Verbal Abuse,” from *Violence Against Queer People* (2015)
- CLAPBACK ASSIGNMENT

Fri 10/20 | **Incarceration and the Abolition Movement**

- Eric A. Stanley and Nat Smith, *Captive Genders: Trans Embodiment and the Prison Industrial Complex* [Ebrary], 123-139, 189-208
- Angela Davis, “How Gender Structures the Prison System” in *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (2003), 60-83.
- Critical Resistance and INCITE!, “Gender Violence and the Prison-Industrial Complex”
<http://www.incite-national.org/page/incite-critical-resistance-statement>

Tues, 10/24 | Intersectionality

- “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color,” *Stanford Law Review* 43:6 (July 1991)
- Jenée Desmond-Harris, “To Understand the Women’s March on Washington, You Need to Understand Intersectional Feminism”
<https://www.vox.com/identities/2017/1/17/14267766/womens-march-on-washington-inauguration-trump-feminism-intersectionality-race-class>

VI. The Body

Fri, 10/27 | Beauty Aesthetics

- Debra Grimlin, “Cosmetic Surgery: Paying for Your Beauty” from *Body Work: Beauty and Self Image in American Culture* (2002)
- S. Tate, “Black Beauty: Shade, Hair, and Anti-racist Aesthetics,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30:2 (2007): 300-319.
Optional
- Sharon Heijin Lee, “Between Empires: Global Feminism, Plastic Surgery, and the Trouble with Self Esteem” *Frontiers* 37 (2016):1-31.
- Julia Serano, “Skirt Chasers: Why the Media Depicts the Trans Revolution in Lipstick and Heels,” in *Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity* [ebrary]

Tue, 10/31 | Discussion Section: Coming of Age “Graphic Fatness” and Sexual Identity

- Mariko and Jillian Tamaki, *Skim*
- *Optional*: Marty Fink, “It Gets Fatter: Graphic Fatness and Resilient Eating in Mariko and Jillian Tamaki’s *Skim*,” *Fat Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Body Weight and Society* 2 (2013): 136-146.
- Marty Fink, “Fat Girls Need Fiction.” In E. Rothblum and S. Solovay, eds., *The Fat Studies Reader*.
- CLAPBACK ASSIGNMENT

VII. Reproductive Health

Fri 11/3 **Reproductive Health**

- Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* (1998) intro and chpt 4
- Carol Sanger, *About Abortion* (2017), chpt. 7
- Dani McClain, “The Murder of Black Youth is a Reproductive Justice Issue,” *The Nation* (13 August 2014)

Tue 11/7 | **Discussion Section: Disability: Reproductive Rights, Sexual Pleasure, and Desire**

In-class screening

Film: Patty Berne, *Sins Invalid*

“This documentary witnesses a performance project that incubates and celebrates artists with disabilities, centralizing artists of color and queer and gender-variant artists. Since 2006, its performances have explored themes of sexuality, beauty, and the disabled body, impacting thousands through live performance. *Sins Invalid* is an entryway into the absurdly taboo topic of sexuality and disability, manifesting a new paradigm of disability justice.”

- Rosemary Garland Thomson, “Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory,”
- Dea Busk Larsen, “Creating Disability: Invisible Bodies and Public Space,” *Hysteria 3* (2014)
- www.hystericalfeminisms.com/voices/2016/10/22/creating-disability-invisible-bodies-and-public-space
- CLAPBACK ASSIGNMENT

Thr, 11/9 **Cultural Analysis Paper due by Latte Submission**

Fri, 11/10 **Gender and Art: A Field Trip to the Rose Art Museum**

VIII. Gender and the Institutions of Everyday Life

Tues 11/14 | **Marriage and Family**

- Chrys Ingraham, *White Weddings: Romancing Heterosexuality in Popular Culture* (1999), chpt 2
- Michael Warner, “Beyond Gay Marriage,” in *The Trouble with Normal Sex: Politics and the Ethics of Queer Life*
- Pat Mianardi, “The Politics of Housework,” *The Essential Feminist Reader*, 288-294

Fri 11/17 | **Discussion Section: Race, Gender, and the Work of Care**

- **Film:** *Maid in America* (Please screen before class)
- Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, “Maid in L.A.” in *Domestica: Immigrant*

Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence, 29-62.

- Ruth Margalit, "Israel's Invisible Filipino Work Force," NYT (3 May 2017)
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/03/magazine/israels-invisible-filipino-work-force.html?mcubz=1>
- Clapback Assignment
Optional:
Rhacel Salazar Parrenas, "The Care Crisis in the Philippines: Children and Transnational Families in the New Global Economy," in *Global Women: Nannies, Maid, and Sex Workers in the New Economy*

IX. Feminist Activism: Domestic and Global

Tue 11/21 | Neoliberalism and The Global Economy

- Hester Eisenstein, "A Dangerous Liaison? Feminism and Corporate Globalization" *Science and Society* (2005)
- Maria Hengeveld, "How Nike's Neoliberal Feminism Came to Rule the Global Economy," *Feministwire* (2015)
<http://www.thefeministwire.com/2015/09/nike-neoliberal-feminism/>
- Eileen Otis, "Virtual Personalism in Beijing: Learning Deference and Femininity at a Global Luxury Hotel," in *Working in China: Ethnographies of Labor and Workplace Transformation*.
EXTRA CREDIT:

Thanksgiving Break (Indigenous People's Day of Mourning)

Tue, 11/28 | Environmental Violence and Indigenous Women

- Saul Elbein, "The Youth Group That Launched a Movement at Standing Rock," *NYT* (31 January 2017)
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/31/magazine/the-youth-group-that-launched-a-movement-at-standing-rock.html>
- Kathi Wilson, "First Nations and First Nations Peoples in Canada: Linking Culture, Gender, and Nature," *Gender, Place, and Culture* 12:3 (2005): 333-355.
- Naomi Klein, "Dancing the World into Being: A Conversation with Idle No More's Leanne Simpson," *Yes Magazine* (2013)
<http://www.yesmagazine.org/peace-justice/dancing-the-world-into-being-a-conversation-with-idle-no-more-leanne-simpson>

Fri, 12/1 Discussion Sections: Forced Migration and Refugees: Gendered Narratives

- Viet Thanh Nguyen, *The Refugees* (select stories TBA)
- Warsan Shire, *Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth* (entire)
Optional
- Aihwa Ong, "Refugee Love as Feminist Compassion," in *Buddha is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, and the New America* (2003), 143-168.

Tue 12/5| **Feminism in the Service of Empire**

- Abu Lughod, “Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and its Others” (2002)
- Jasbir Puar. “Feminism and Queers in the Service of Empire in Robin Riley, et. al. *Feminism and War: Confronting U.S. Imperialism* (2009), 47-56.

Wed12/6 **Graphic Novel Paper Due By Latte Submission**

Fri 12/8 | **Gender and Global Politics: Wrapping Up**

- Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (selections)

Final Exam During Exam Week